CHAPTER 1

TRANSWAVE EVENTS
TransWave’s Trans Health and Wellness Symposium

TransWave’s Trans Health and Wellness Symposium was successfully executed in February. The organisation embarked on this project to put on a conference aimed at creating a space for conversations around issues affecting the trans community and to build partnerships to aid us in the work that we do. The CFLI-sponsored event took place at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel with a range of partners and participants, hosted by Brithney Clarke.

The day’s proceedings included two panel discussions about the implications of gender-based violence and the economic and educational opportunities for the transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary people. Emina Tudakovic, Canadian High Commissioner made an insightful address to the audience, imploring members of the community to take their health seriously, especially as it relates to the HIV/AIDS rates in Jamaica. On the panel about gender-based violence, Jaemar Johnson (JN+), Karlene McCallum (JFJ), Lamar Grant and Dr. Karen Carpenter (UWI) were participants who ably shared their perspectives on the culture and causes of GBV in Jamaica, along with the nuances of this for the trans community.

On the panel about economic and educational opportunities for the trans community was Jaevion Nelson (USAID), Renae Green (TransWave), Anika Walsh and Quinn. Natalie Palmer, Deputy Superintendent of Police and Richard Amenyah, Country Director, UNAIDS Jamaica were also in attendance.

TransWave successfully engaged vital stakeholders such as civil society, government agencies and members of the community regarding the crucial issues to our community.
Rainbow House Launch

The offices of the Equality Group were successfully launched in February. The space, called ‘Rainbow House’ was launched with a celebratory event on February 28th at the location in Kingston. The purchase of the building and the event was made possible by a fund that was put together call the Building Fund that many organisations contributed toward. The selection of the space was done through the collaboration of the organisations under the Equality Group – TransWave Jamaica, the Equality for all Foundation (EFAF) and Equality Youth Jamaica (EYJ).

The event was colourful and filled with numerous community members, staff, funders and other supporters of the LGBTQIA rights movement in Jamaica. Former EFAF Executive Director, Jaevion Nelson, aptly hosted the night’s proceedings. Some of the most notable guests included Ivan Cruikshank, Board Chairman, EFAF; Renae Green, Executive Director, TransWave; Sean Lord, Senior Youth Programme Officer, Equality Youth Jamaica; Kandasi Levermore, Executive Director, Jamaica AIDS Support For Life; Natalie Campbell-Rodriques, Government Senator and Alex Gainer, USAID Acting Country Representative. They all gave congratulatory remarks and showed their support for the strides the Rainbow House represents. Other partners and supporters sent their well-wishes via video such as Rupert Abbott, GiveOut UK; Stefan Bollier, Dreilinden and Julie Dorf, Equality Without Borders.
CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY CORNER
THE NON-BINARY
Community that I was introduced to after having embraced my identity is really beautiful. There’s a lot of willingness to help and assist others figure out who they are and/or aren’t. Being exposed to and having engaged with persons like myself, really helped me to put certain things into place.

- Levi (they/them)

SYSTEM
We should, you know, crash the system. When we say system, C-I-S-TEM.

- Matthew (they/them)

RESPECT
Everybody supposed to be treated like a normal person, not because we are different. It’s good to be different. The entire LGBTQ+ community deserves respect.

- Ashley (she/her)
CHAPTER 3

WHAT'S NEXT
In May 2018, TransWave hosted the first trans health and wellness conference in the Caribbean region. The hosting of the conference at the time was very important because there is insufficient attention is paid to the specific health care issues affecting the transgender community in Jamaica. An established framework for gender-affirming services is non-existent, and trans and gender non-conforming people continue to experience stigma and discrimination when attempting to access health care services. In addition, the critical issue of mental health of this vulnerable population is largely overlooked; leaving transgender people on their own to navigate a society, where their gender identity and/or gender expression often make them a target for violence and/or social exclusion or low educational/employment attainment.

After the first staging in 2018, the conference became an annual event with the next staging done in 2019 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference had to be paused due to restrictions on social gatherings that were implemented. The next staging is scheduled for May 2023, focusing on research in the accessibility, and responsiveness of available sexual, reproductive and gender affirming health services including HIV services and support, gender affirming surgeries and care, mental health the implications of gender-based violence, economic and educational activities for trans Jamaicans and access to hormone replacement therapy.
The Kings and Queens Show

The Kings and Queens show was founded against the backdrop of the lack of queer individuals as it relates to avenues for them to showcase the tremendous amount of talent that lies within the community. Moreover, the lack of representation in pageantry in the OECS region especially for Trans identifying individuals. In most of our individual countries, we have Miss Princess Shows, Miss Teen, Miss Independence, National Carnival Queen, Miss Universe, and so forth. It was not until recently some countries introduced Mr. Independence, Mr. St Lucia, Dominica, Trinidad & Tobago, etc as well as Mr. Supranatural. Notwithstanding that on the regional platform, there is a series of pageants that are geared towards their heterosexual counterparts which provide an avenue for them to express themselves freely and without judgment in various areas and to pursue future opportunities.

There is nothing for queer people with the exception of Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago which occasionally host Drag Pageants. St Lucia on the other recently held a pageant in 2015 for queer people and has not hosted any since. Also, pride seems to be picking up in the region however not all countries are able to host pride celebrations which is also a hindrance to queer people.

The first “Kings & Queens” show will take place in May of 2023 and will be a chic display of natural, queer charm. It will target young, talented queer and trans individuals between the ages of 18 and 45. The contestants will be expected to participate in all the segments: Introduction/Cultural Wear, Talent, Swimwear, Evening Wear/Formal Attire, Interview.
CHAPTER

CREATIVE CORNER
deadname (brother paw)

goodbye
former me
the child they didn’t notice was dying
“sorry” is too short a word
to describe the pain i feel for you
my condolences
to the life you used to live
to the love they refused to give
to the laughs
deafening the late night sobbing.
i will leave with you
blue forget-me-nots
and absolute gratitude
for the life you gave me in death
i won’t call you by your name
but perhaps
i will call you by mine
i will miss you, my love
hello

Mali
SMELL THE FLOWERS

I, inhale
“Smell the flowers,” they say,
I do it,
I dip my feet in the water too,
Just before jumping in,
Fully submerged,
Fully drenched,
Soak up the sun,
Like I soaked up the water,
Like I soaked up the happiness,
A smile that tastes like honey on my lips,
Breaths of fresh air.

“Smell the flowers, again”
I did,
I go in for a warm hug,
I whisper in your ear,
How much I love you,
You feel like Sunday mornings,
We hum our favourite songs.
“Smell the flowers,” I tell you,
You do this with no hesitation,
We lie here,
In the grass on a blanket,
In your arms,
Your breath feels like honey on my lips,
Your lips so soft,
So pure,
So smooth,
Like velvet,
Like silk,
You whisper in my ear,
“I love you,”
I smile.

“Smell the flowers,”
We said at once,
And I keep smelling,
You keep smelling,
We keep smiling,
We keep getting lost in the scent of this love.
I didn’t fall in love with you just because I knew that it was something I could do. I fell in love with you because from the moment I met you, well, from the moment I saw you, something within me just knew.

I didn’t fall in love with you because it was easy, I fell in love with you because I knew that, though it would be hard, you’re worth it.

I fell in love with you because you felt like home, you felt like the sunny days filled with rainbows after nights of thunderstorms, you felt like, just the love of my life and I’ve been wondering, pondering, thinking, just, in my head, trying to figure out what exactly that means. What meeting the love of my life actually means. Because I thought, silly me, really thought that I had met them before, the people in my past I, thought I knew what true love really felt like but with you, I realize, I was naive. With you, I realize that the feeling of love comes naturally, with you, I realize that I have a comfort level that I didn’t have with anyone else.
I fell in love with you because you made it easy for me to be myself, you never judged even when you might’ve not completely understood, you listened, you took your time to realize, to try and read between the lines, to notice what made me, me and you loved me.

You still love me, for all that I am and for everything that I show you I can be, you love me.

I didn’t fall in love with you because I was searching for love, I fell in love with you because it was the exact opposite.

I fell in love with you because I didn’t expect to meet anyone new at this time of my life but you came out the blue and you showed me that my life would be completely renewed.

It was as if the stars had aligned, as if you and I just somehow knew that we were sent for each other by some form of divine energy, we just knew.

And no matter what we may go through, no matter the distance, the lack of whatever we could ever lack, I know that I want to stay by your side and I know that I want you by mine.

Because I’ve never felt a love like this before, I never knew that a love could excite me this much ever in my life but you’ve brought me new feelings that I’ve never felt and I thank you and I appreciate you and I know that it’s only going to get better and better from here on out because we have our whole lives ahead of us and that’s what makes it even better.

I didn’t fall in love with you because I could, I fell in love with you because every part of my being, knew that it was only a matter of time, until I would. // 01.26.22

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Major Publications

TransWave has been working continuously to produce research, letters-to-the-editor, articles etc that amplify trans voice and trans experiences. Here are some of our major publications for the first quarter of 2023.

To read these publications, click the link and visit our Issuu.
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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR: GBV IN THE LGBT COMMUNITY**

Jan 25, 2023 12:08 am · Make a comment

Ears ongoing fight against GBV in the LGBT community

**THE EDITOR, Madam:**

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the recent decision by the World Athletics Council to ban transgender women from competing in elite female competitions, as well as the new regulations that may keep athletes with differences in sex development (DSD) from competing. These policies are not only discriminatory, but they also violate the basic principles of fairness and inclusivity in sports and send a very harmful message to the wider society.

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR: GIVE TRANS ATHLETES A FAIR CHANCE**

Published: Saturday | March 25, 2023 | 12:10 AM

**Give transgender athletes a fair chance**

To read these publications, click the link and visit our Issuu.
CHAPTER

Major Campaigns
In March, TransWave also released the videos for our HIV campaign on all our social platforms. The campaign was funded by Global Funded and featured various members of the transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary community. We also featured healthcare professionals who explained HIV/AIDS, prevention and treatment.

To read these publications, click the link and visit our Instagram page.
Major Campaigns

TransWave also released a campaign geared towards educating others about the Trans and Gender Non-Conforming National Health Strategy. This is a five-year rights-based plan that aims to provide advancement for the health and well-being of trans people. In this campaign, we invited healthcare professionals, legal professionals as well community members who shared information and their experiences with the health industry. We share recommendations about the need for increased education and training of healthcare workers, about issues that affect the trans community, to reduce anti-trans discriminatory behaviour.

To read these publications, click the link and visit our Instagram page.